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United Nations Forum on Forests

Report on the twelfth session
(25 April 2016 and 1 to 5 May 2017)

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft decision for adoption by the Council

1. The United Nations Forum on Forests recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its twelfth session and provisional agenda for its thirteenth session

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Takes note of the report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its twelfth session;[1]

(b) Approves the provisional agenda for the thirteenth session of the Forum as set out below:

Provisional agenda for the thirteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030:
   (a) Policy dialogue on the thematic and operational priorities, priority actions and resource needs for the period 2017-2018, taking into account the review cycle of the high-level political forum on sustainable development during the biennium and the theme of the International Day of Forests;
   (b) Voluntary announcement of voluntary national contributions;
   (c) United Nations system-wide contributions to the implementation of the global forest goals and targets;
   (d) Development of the communication and outreach strategy for the strategic plan.
4. Monitoring, assessment and reporting:
   (a) Progress on the implementation of the strategic plan, including the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions;
   (b) Progress on the development of global forest indicators.
5. Means of implementation:
   (a) Progress on the activities and the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network;

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2017, Supplement No. 22* (E/2017/42).

(b) Guidelines for the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network;

(c) Measures to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network.

6. Emerging issues and challenges.

7. Trust Fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests.

8. Information on intersessional activities.

9. Progress in the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33.

10. Date and venue for the fourteenth session of the Forum.

11. Provisional agenda for the fourteenth session of the Forum.

12. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its thirteenth session.

B. Resolutions brought to the attention of the Council

2 The following resolutions adopted by the United Nations Forum on Forests at its twelfth session are brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council:

Resolution 12/1
Outcome of the twelfth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

The United Nations Forum on Forests,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolutions 2015/33 of 22 July 2015 on the international arrangement on forests beyond 2015 and 2017/4 of 20 April 2017 on the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 and quadrennial programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for the period 2017-2020,

Recalling also General Assembly resolutions 71/285 of 27 April 2017 on the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 and 71/286, also of 27 April 2017, on the United Nations forest instrument,

Monitoring, assessment and reporting

1. *Requests* the Forum secretariat to further revise the format for voluntary national reporting to the Forum on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030, including the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions, on the basis of consultations with members of the Forum and other intersessional activities, the views expressed during the twelfth session and any pilot testing of the current draft format that may be undertaken with interested members of the Forum from the five regional groups;

2. *Notes* the ongoing work led by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to develop a set of global forest indicators, in particular on sustainable forest management, for use in assessing progress on the global forest goals and targets set out in the strategic plan, the forest-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals and other international forest-related commitments, and invites the Partnership to present its proposal for consideration by the Forum at its thirteenth session, to be held in May 2018;

3. *Decides* to consider at its thirteenth session the cycle and format for the first voluntary national reporting to the Forum, taking into account the work on

forest indicators, relevant reporting cycles and the need to reduce reporting burdens, as well as potential communication products from such reporting;

Means of implementation

4. *Reaffirms* that the implementation framework set out in the strategic plan, including the means of implementation and voluntary national contributions, offers new opportunities to strengthen sustainable forest management;

5. *Welcomes* the funding made available for forests under the sixth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (2014-2018) through the cross-cutting strategy for sustainable forest management, as well as through the Global Environment Facility focal areas related to forests;

6. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility, in consultation with donors, to make further funds available for sustainable forest management and other forest-related initiatives under its seventh replenishment cycle (2018-2022);

7. *Invites* members of the Forum to make full use of other international instruments, mechanisms, agreements and partnerships to enhance the implementation of sustainable forest management and the achievement of the global forest goals and targets;

8. *Reaffirms* the important role of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network in contributing to the scaling up of sustainable forest management by facilitating access for countries to resources to implement the strategic plan and achieve its global forest goals and targets, and welcomes the progress made in operationalizing the Network;

9. *Decides* that the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network should carry out its priorities, as set out in the strategic plan, in a balanced, effective and transparent manner;

10. *Invites* members of the Forum and others in a position to do so to provide voluntary contributions to the Forum Trust Fund to support enhanced activities under the Network;

Enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues

11. *Welcomes* the initiatives undertaken by members of the Forum, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its member organizations, regional and subregional organizations and processes and major groups in contributing to the development and implementation of the strategic plan and the Forum's quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017-2020;

12. *Also welcomes* the new policy document developed by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to strengthen its operations and enhance the effectiveness of its work;

13. *Notes* the work of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests towards developing a workplan that will outline the collective contributions and joint initiatives of its members, aligned with the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 and the Forum's quadrennial programme of work;

14. *Invites* the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to take into account inputs from members of the Forum on the draft workplan in preparation for its meeting in September 2017, and invites the Partnership to present its workplan to the thirteenth session of the Forum;

15. *Also invites* the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to consider expanding its membership to include intergovernmental partners at the international level that have expressed interest in joining the Partnership;

16. *Encourages* members of the Forum to announce their initial voluntary national contributions to achieving one or more of the global forest goals and targets set out in the strategic plan at the thirteenth session of the Forum and to communicate their announcements to the Forum secretariat through appropriate channels;

17. *Encourages* major groups and other relevant stakeholders to continue their involvement in the work of the Forum, including by elaborating proposals or workplans on how they can contribute to the implementation of the strategic plan and the Forum's quadrennial programme of work, and to present such proposals or plans to the Forum at its thirteenth session;

18. *Adopts* the guidelines for country-led and similar initiatives in support of the work of the Forum, as contained in the annex to the present resolution;

19. *Stresses* the importance of communicating the critical contribution of forests and the strategic plan to sustainable development, including through the annual platform provided by the International Day of Forests;

Contribution to the high-level political forum on sustainable development

20. *Emphasizes* the importance of the Forum's technical discussions at its twelfth session on the contribution of forests to poverty eradication, food security and gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and on the means of implementation for sustainable forest management, as well as the relevance of these discussions to the Sustainable Development Goals under review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2017;

21. *Requests* the Chair to finalize his summaries of the Forum's technical discussions, in consultation with Bureau members, and to transmit the summaries to the high-level political forum as an input to its 2017 review;

22. *Emphasizes* the importance of the United Nations Forum on Forests providing an input to the high-level political forum in 2018 on the Sustainable Development Goals to be reviewed;

23. *Requests* the Forum secretariat to prepare, in consultation with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, a report containing proposals on actions to accelerate progress in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 15 and its forest-related targets, as well as background analytical studies on the contribution of forests to the achievement of the other Sustainable Development Goals to be reviewed by the high-level political forum in 2018, for the Forum's consideration at its thirteenth session;

24. *Invites* members of the Forum, member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, United Nations system partners, regional and subregional organizations and processes, major groups and other stakeholders to provide inputs to the Forum secretariat by 30 November 2017 on the contribution of forests to the issues under consideration by the high-level political forum in 2018;

25. *Requests* the Forum secretariat to synthesize the inputs received and submit the synthesis as background information to the thirteenth session of the Forum;

26. *Welcomes* the initiative of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to organize an international conference on halting deforestation and increasing forest

area as a contribution to the Forum's deliberations at its thirteenth session and the Forum's input to the high-level political forum in 2018;

27. *Invites* members of the Forum, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its member organizations, United Nations system partners, regional and subregional organizations and processes, major groups and other stakeholders to undertake initiatives to highlight the significance of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[1] and to present the outcomes of those initiatives to the thirteenth session of the Forum;

28. *Decides* that the Forum, at its thirteenth session, will finalize its substantive input to the high-level political forum in 2018, taking into account the inputs provided to the Forum.

Annex
Guidelines for initiatives led by countries, organizations, regions and major groups

The overall purpose of any initiative led by a country, organization, region or major group is to support the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests. Thus, the organizers may wish to consider the following guidelines when planning such initiatives:

(a) Initiatives shall be directly related to the priorities of the United Nations Forum on Forests as defined in the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 and the Forum's quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017-2020;

(b) Initiatives shall be informal in nature, transparent and participatory, strive for balanced representation, including gender representation, and be open to participation by all States members of the Forum, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and representatives of major groups, as well as other interested stakeholders;

(c) Proponents of an initiative should bring their interest in convening an initiative to the attention of the Bureau and the secretariat of the Forum, in writing, stating the objectives of the initiative, its relevance to the work of the Forum, the proposed venue and date and the estimated level of participation;

(d) The secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests shall participate in the committee established to support the initiative;

(e) The cost of such initiatives shall be borne by the hosts or donors or financed from other sources. The United Nations regular budget shall not cover the cost of such initiatives. Funds from the United Nations Forum on Forests Trust Fund may be used for such initiatives only if specifically earmarked for that purpose by a donor;

(f) The Bureau member from the region in which the initiative is being held shall be invited to attend;

(g) The travel and expenses of one member of the Forum secretariat shall be covered by the initiative;

(h) Following the conclusion of an initiative, the organizers shall submit a report for presentation to the Secretary-General, to be made available on the website of the United Nations Forum on Forests; the organizers shall also present the outcome of the initiative to the subsequent session of the Forum, for its consideration;

[1] General Assembly resolution 70/1.

(i) In the interest of registering and acknowledging the contribution of all those involved in the initiative, including in terms of their financial support, the proponents of the initiative may wish to include such information in the report to be submitted to the Secretary-General;

(j) Countries, organizations, regions and major groups are invited to consider the present guidelines, which shall apply to the initiatives announced after the twelfth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

Resolution 12/2
Term of office of the officers of the Forum

The United Nations Forum on Forests,

Recalling paragraph 7 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35 of 18 October 2000, in which the Council decided that the United Nations Forum on Forests would, inter alia, determine the duration of the term of office of its officers,

Recalling also Council resolution 2015/33 of 22 July 2015, in which the Council decided that the Forum would dedicate its even-year sessions to policy discussions and its odd-year sessions to discussions on implementation and technical advice,

1. *Decides* that, starting at its fourteenth regular session, the Forum shall elect its officers for a two-year term of office with a view to ensuring continuity between policy and technical sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests;

2. *Recognizes* that this decision shall not be used as a precedent for other functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

C. Decisions brought to the attention of the Council

3. The following decisions adopted by the United Nations Forum on Forests at its twelfth session are brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council:

Decision 12/101
Dates and venue of the thirteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

The United Nations Forum on Forests, recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33 of 22 July 2015, decides that the thirteenth session of the Forum will be held at Headquarters from 7 to 11 May 2018.

Decision 12/102
Documentation considered by the United Nations Forum on Forests at its twelfth session

The United Nations Forum on Forests takes note of the following documents considered at its twelfth session:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress towards implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030, including the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions (E/CN.18/2017/3);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues (E/CN.18/2017/5).

Chapter II
Implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030

(a) Technical discussion and exchange of experiences on the thematic and operational priorities, priority actions and resource needs for the period 2017-2018, taking into account the review cycle of the high-level political forum on sustainable development during the biennium and the theme of the International Day of Forests

(b) Voluntary announcement of voluntary national contributions, where appropriate

(c) United Nations system-wide contributions to the implementation of the global forest goals and targets

4. The Forum considered agenda item 3 and its sub-items (a) to (c) at its 2nd to 6th, 8th and 10th meetings, from 1 to 5 May 2017. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the note by the Secretariat on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 (E/CN.18/2017/2).

5. At the 2nd meeting, on 1 May, the Director of the Forum secretariat introduced the document under the item.

Action taken by the Forum

6. At its 10th meeting, on 5 May, the Forum had before it a draft omnibus resolution of the twelfth session of the Forum, submitted by the Bureau on the basis of informal consultations, which was circulated in an informal paper, in English only, under agenda item 3 (Implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030), item 4 (Monitoring, assessment and reporting), item 5 (Means of implementation) and item 6 (Enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues).

7. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania, Chile, the United States of America, Switzerland, Ukraine and Nigeria, as well as by the observer for the European Union.

8. Also at the same meeting, the Chair (Canada) made a statement and suspended the meeting.

9. At the resumption of the 10th meeting, on 5 May, statements were made by the representatives of Nigeria (on behalf of the African Group), the United States, China, Ecuador, Brazil and the Russian Federation, as well as by the observer for the European Union.

10. At the same meeting, the Chair made a statement and orally revised the draft resolution.

11. Also at the same meeting, the Secretary of the Forum made a statement.

12. Also at its 10th meeting, on 5 May, the Forum adopted the draft resolution as orally revised (see chap. I, sect. B, resolution 12/1).

Panel discussion on the contributions of the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, United Nations partners and stakeholders to the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030

13. At its 3rd meeting, on 1 May, the Forum held a panel discussion under agenda item 3 (c) (United Nations system-wide contributions to the implementation of the global forest goals and targets). For the Chair's summary, see annex I, sect. A.

14. At the same meeting, the introductory statement of the Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, Maria Helena Semedo, was delivered by the Director of the Forestry Policy and Resources Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Eva Muller.

15. Comments were made and questions were posed by the representative of Switzerland, to which the representative of FAO responded.

16. Also at the same meeting, statements were made by the observer for the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan, as well as by the representative of the scientific and technological communities major group.

17. Following a statement by the Chair (Canada), the Director of the Forestry Policy and Resources Division of FAO delivered a keynote address.

18. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the moderator of the panel discussion, Hosny el-Lakany, distinguished professor at Alexandria University and adjunct professor and the Director of the International Forestry Programme of the Faculty of Forestry at the University of British Columbia.

19. Statements were made by the following panellists: the Deputy Director of the Global Forest and Climate Change Programme of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, Carole Saint-Laurent, a senior scientific officer of the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Milena Sosa-Schmidt; and the Assistant Executive Director of the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation, Xia Jun.

20. The panellists responded to comments made and questions posed by the representatives of Colombia, China, Mexico, Brazil, Malaysia, Chile, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

21. The observers for the European Union and the International Union of Forest Research Organizations also participated in the discussion.

Panel discussion on the contributions of forests to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere): forests and poverty eradication

22. At its 4th meeting, on 2 May, the Forum held a panel discussion under agenda item 3 (a) (Technical discussion and exchange of experiences on the thematic and operational priorities, priority actions and resource needs for the period 2017-2018, taking into account the review cycle of the high-level political forum on sustainable development during the biennium and the theme of the International Day of Forests), chaired by the Vice-Chair (China). For the Chair's summary, see annex I, sect. B, panel session 1.

23. At the same meeting, an independent scholar and development economist, Uma Lele, delivered a keynote address.

24. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the moderator of the panel discussion and Director of the Forest Legality Initiative of the Forest Programme at the World Resources Institute, Charles Barber.

25. Statements were made by the following panellists: the Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Organization, Gerhard Dieterle; the Executive Secretary of the African Forest Forum, Godwin Kowero; and a senior fellow at the Center for Global Development, Frances Seymour.

26. Following a statement by the moderator, the keynote speaker and the panellists responded to comments made and questions posed by the representatives of Chile,

China, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Canada, Finland, Indonesia, Malaysia and Ecuador.

27. The observers for the European Union and the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan also participated in the discussion.

28. A statement was also made by the representative of the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

29. A statement was also made by the representative of the farmers and small forest landowners major group.

30. Statements were also made by the moderator and the Vice-Chair (China).

Panel discussion on the contributions of forests to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls)

31. At its 5th meeting, on 2 May, the Forum held a panel discussion under agenda item 3 (a) (Technical discussion and exchange of experiences on the thematic and operational priorities, priority actions and resource needs for the period 2017-2018, taking into account the review cycle of the high-level political forum on sustainable development during the biennium and the theme of the International Day of Forests), chaired by the Vice-Chair (Gabon), who made an opening statement. For the Chair's summary, see annex I, sect. B, panel session 2.

32. At the same meeting, a senior researcher and the Team Leader of the Forestry Team of the International Institute for Environment and Development, Isilda Nhantumbo, delivered a keynote address by video link.

33. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the moderator of the panel discussion and Policy Adviser for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), Seemin Qayum.

34. Statements were made by the following panellists: the Chief Executive Officer and Conservator of Forests, Forestry Department of Jamaica, Marilyn Headley; the Director of the African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests, Cécile Bibiane Ndjebet; and the United Nations Ambassador of the Women's Environment and Development Organization, Latha Swamy.

35. The panellists responded to comments made and questions posed by the representatives of Canada, Australia, Colombia, Uruguay, Peru, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Sweden, Indonesia, Finland, Mexico, Saint Lucia, Nigeria (on behalf of the African Group) and New Zealand.

36. The observers for the European Union and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe also participated in the discussion.

37. A statement was also made by the representative of the children and youth major group.

Panel discussion on the contributions of forests to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture): forests and food security

38. At its 6th meeting, on 3 May, the Forum held a panel discussion under agenda item 3 (a) (Technical discussion and exchange of experiences on the thematic and operational priorities, priority actions and resource needs for the period 2017-2018, taking into account the review cycle of the high-level political forum on sustainable

development during the biennium and the theme of the International Day of Forests), chaired by the Vice-Chair (Czechia). For the Chair's summary, see annex I, sect. B, panel session 3.

39. At the same meeting, the Founding Director of the Conservation Research Institute and Reader in the Political Economy of Environment and Development of the Department of Geography at the University of Cambridge, Bhaskar Vira, delivered a keynote address.

40. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the moderator of the panel discussion and Chief of the Joint Forestry and Timber Section of the Economic Commission for Europe and FAO, Paola Deda.

41. Statements were made by the following panellists: the Deputy Director General of Climate and Natural Resources of FAO, Maria Helena Semedo; the Vice-President for Task Forces, Special Programmes, Projects and IUFRO-led Initiatives, International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), John Parrotta; and an assistant professor at the Department of Geography of Penn State University, Bronwen Powell.

42. The keynote speaker and the panellists responded to comments made and questions posed by the representatives of Chile, the Russian Federation, Colombia, South Africa, the United States, Indonesia, Gabon, Germany, Nigeria, Canada, Thailand, Mexico, Cameroon, New Zealand and Nepal.

43. The observer for the European Union also participated in the discussion.

44. A statement was also made by the representative of the farmers and small forest landowners major group.

Discussion on preparations for the provision of input to the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2018, including substantive input to its thematic focus and intersessional activities

45. At its 8th meeting, on 4 May, the Forum held a discussion under agenda item 3 (a) (Technical discussion and exchange of experiences on the thematic and operational priorities, priority actions and resource needs for the period 2017-2018, taking into account the review cycle of the high-level political forum on sustainable development during the biennium and the theme of the International Day of Forests).

46. At the same meeting, the Chair (Canada) made a statement.

47. Also at the same meeting, a statement was made by the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs.

48. In the ensuing discussion, the Assistant Secretary-General responded to comments made and questions posed by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Bhutan, Switzerland, Germany, Nigeria (on behalf of the African Group), Malaysia, China and New Zealand.

49. The observers for the European Union and the International Union of Forest Research Organizations also participated in the discussion.

50. A statement was also made by the representative of FAO.

Chapter III
Monitoring, assessment and reporting

(a) Cycle and format for voluntary national reporting on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030, including the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions

(b) Progress on the development of global forest indicators

(c) Further measures to better synchronize data collection and reduce reporting burden

51. The Forum considered agenda item 4 at its 7th meeting, on 3 May 2017. At its 10th meeting, on 5 May, the Forum considered item 4 jointly with items 3 (Implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030), item 5 (Means of implementation) and item 6 (Enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues). For its consideration of item 4, the Forum had before it the report of the Secretary-General on monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress towards implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030, including the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions (E/CN.18/2017/3).

52. At its 7th meeting, on 3 May, the Forum heard introductory statements by the Director and a representative of the Forum secretariat.

53. At the same meeting, Vicente de Azevedo Araujo Filho (Brazil) presented the summary report of the expert group meeting on reporting to the Forum.

54. Also at the same meeting, the Director of the Forestry Policy and Resources Division of FAO, Eva Muller, presented the summary report of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests organization-led initiative on the global forest indicators.

Action taken by the Forum

55. Under item 4, the Forum adopted one draft resolution (see chap. II, paras. 6-12) and one draft decision (see chap. I, sect. C, decision 12/102).

Documentation considered by the Forum under item 4

56. At its 10th meeting, on 5 May, upon the proposal of the Chair (Canada), the Forum took note of the report of the Secretary-General on monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress towards implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030, including the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions (E/CN.18/2017/3).

Discussion on the proposed format and cycle for voluntary national reporting to the Forum

57. At its 7th meeting, on 3 May, the Forum held a discussion under item 4, chaired by the Vice-Chair (Czechia).

58. The Director and a representative of the Forum secretariat, as well as the Director of the Forestry Policy and Resources Division of FAO, responded to comments made and questions posed by the representatives of Ghana, Austria, Canada, the United States, Japan, Switzerland, Ukraine, Colombia, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria (on behalf of the African Group), Indonesia, New Zealand, Australia, China, Norway, Brazil and Germany.

59. The observers for the European Union, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe and the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan participated in the discussion.

60. Statements were also made by the representatives of the farmers and small forest landowners and the children and youth major groups.

Chapter IV
Means of implementation

(a) Initial discussions on the guidelines for the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and the availability of resources

(b) Progress on the activities and operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network

61. The Forum considered agenda item 5 at its 9th meeting, on 4 May 2017. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the note by the Secretariat on means of implementation for sustainable forest management (E/CN.18/2017/4).

62. At the 9th meeting, on 4 May 2017, an introductory statement was made by the Director of the Forum secretariat.

Action taken by the Forum

63. Under item 5, the Forum adopted one draft resolution (see chap. II, paras. 6-12).

Panel discussion on means of implementation for sustainable forest management

64. At its 9th meeting, on 4 May 2017, the Forum held a discussion under item 5, chaired by the Vice-Chair (China) and moderated by the Director of Programmes of the Global Environment Facility secretariat, Gustavo Fonseca. For the Chair's summary, see annex I, sect. B, panel session 4.

65. Statements were made by the following panellists: the Programme Officer for Equitable Development of the Ford Foundation, Penny Davies; the Manager of the Programme on Forests, Werner Kornex; and the President of STCP Engenharia de Projetos Limitida, Ivan Tomaselli.

66. The Director of the Forum secretariat and the panellists responded to comments made and questions posed by the representatives of Bhutan, Mexico, Ecuador, Germany, Nigeria (on behalf of the African Group), South Africa, Senegal, the United States, the Niger, Cameroon, Saint Lucia, Brazil, China, Malaysia and Guinea.

67. The observer for the European Union also participated in the discussion.

68. A statement was also made by the representative of the scientific and technological communities major group.

Chapter V

Enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues

(a) Information on intersessional activities

(i) Information on the workplan of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and actions to strengthen its operations in support of the strategic plan and the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017-2020

(ii) Regional and subregional partners

(iii) Major groups and other relevant stakeholders

(iv) Communication and outreach activities

(b) Revision of the existing guidelines for country-led initiatives and similar initiatives to enhance their contribution to the work of the Forum

69. The Forum considered agenda item 6 at its 8th meeting, on 4 May 2017. At its 10th meeting, on 5 May, the Forum also considered item 6 jointly with item 3 (Implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030), item 4 (Monitoring, assessment and reporting) and item 5 (Means of implementation). For its consideration of item 6, the Forum had before it the report of the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues (E/CN.18/2017/5).

70. At its 8th meeting, on 4 May, the Forum heard an introductory statement by the Director of the Forum secretariat.

Action taken by the Forum

71. Under item 6, the Forum adopted one draft resolution (see chap. II, paras. 6-12) and one draft decision (see chap. I, sect. C, decision 12/102).

Documentation considered by the Forum under item 6

72. At its 10th meeting, on 5 May, upon the proposal of the Chair (Canada), the Forum took note of the report of the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues (E/CN.18/2017/5).

Chapter VI
Emerging issues and challenges

73. In accordance with the quadrennial programme of work of the Forum for the period 2017-2020, the Forum may decide to include in the agenda of any of its sessions emerging issues and challenges of global significance that are related to and/or have an impact on forests and sustainable forest management and that are urgent, unexpected and not already addressed in the agenda of the respective session.

74. At the twelfth session, the Forum considered agenda item 7 at its 10th meeting, on 5 May 2017, when it recalled that a discussion on emerging issues and challenges of global significance had been held as part of the technical discussion and exchange of experiences under item 3 (c) (see chap. II, paras. 13-21).

Chapter VII
Forum Trust Fund

75. The Forum considered agenda item 8 at its 10th meeting, on 5 May 2017. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the note by the Secretariat on the Forum Trust Fund (E/CN.18/2017/6).

76. At its 10th meeting, on 5 May, the Forum heard an introductory statement by the Director of the Forum secretariat.

Chapter VIII
Date and venue for the thirteenth session of the Forum

77. The Forum considered agenda item 9 at its 10th meeting, on 5 May 2017. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it a draft decision entitled "Dates and venue of the thirteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests" (E/CN.18/2017/L.2).

Action taken by the Forum

78. Under item 9, the Forum adopted the draft decision (see chap. I, sect. C, decision 12/101).

Chapter IX
Provisional agenda for the thirteenth session of the Forum

79. The Forum considered agenda item 10 at its 10th meeting, on 5 May 2017. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it a draft decision entitled "Provisional agenda for the thirteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests" (E/CN.18/2017/L.1).

Action taken by the Forum

80. At the same meeting, the Forum adopted the provisional agenda for its thirteenth session for submission to the Economic and Social Council at its 2017 session (see chap. I, sect. A).

Chapter X

Adoption of the report of the Forum on its twelfth session

81. The Forum considered agenda item 11 at its 10th meeting, on 5 May 2017. For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it the draft report on its twelfth session (E/CN.18/2017/L.3).

Action taken by the Forum

82. At the 10th meeting, on 5 May, the Rapporteur (Czechia) introduced the draft report. Subsequently, the Forum adopted the draft report and entrusted the Rapporteur with its finalization in collaboration with the secretariat, for submission to the Economic and Social Council at its 2017 session.

Chapter XI
Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

83. The United Nations Forum on Forests held its twelfth session at United Nations Headquarters on 25 April 2016 and from 1 to 5 May 2017. The Forum held 10 plenary meetings (1st to 10th).

84. At the 1st meeting, on 25 April 2016, the Chair pro tempore, Srećko Juričić (Croatia), opened the twelfth session.

85. At the 2nd meeting, on 1 May 2017, the President of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, Peter Thomson (Fiji), and the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, Marie Chatardová (Czechia), addressed the Forum.

86. At the same meeting, opening statements were made by the Chair of the twelfth session, Peter Besseau (Canada); the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Wu Hongbo; and the Director of the Forum secretariat, Manoel Sobral Filho.

B. Election of officers

87. At its 1st meeting, on 25 April 2016, the Forum elected, by acclamation, Peter Besseau (Canada) as Chair and Clarissa Souza Della Nina (Brazil), Wu Zhimin (China) and Tomas Krejzar (Czechia) as Vice-Chairs of the twelfth session.

88. At its 2nd meeting, on 1 May 2017, the Forum elected, by acclamation, Baudelaire Ndong Ella (Gabon) as Vice-Chair of the twelfth session.

89. At the same meeting, the Forum appointed Tomas Krejzar (Czechia) as Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur of the twelfth session.

C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

90. At its 2nd meeting, on 1 May 2017, the Forum adopted its provisional agenda for the session as contained in document E/CN.18/2017/1. The agenda read as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030:
   (a) Technical discussion and exchange of experiences on the thematic and operational priorities, priority actions and resource needs for the period 2017-2018, taking into account the review cycle of the high-level political forum on sustainable development during the biennium and the theme of the International Day of Forests;
   (b) Voluntary announcement of voluntary national contributions, where appropriate;
   (c) United Nations system-wide contributions to the implementation of the global forest goals and targets.
4. Monitoring, assessment and reporting:

(a) Cycle and format for voluntary national reporting on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030, including the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions;

(b) Progress on the development of global forest indicators;

(c) Further measures to better synchronize data collection and reduce reporting burden.

5. Means of implementation:

(a) Initial discussions on the guidelines for the operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network and the availability of resources;

(b) Progress on the activities and operation of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network.

6. Enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues:

(a) Information on intersessional activities:

(i) Information on the workplan of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and actions to strengthen its operations in support of the strategic plan and the quadrennial programme of work for the period 2017-2020;

(ii) Regional and subregional partners;

(iii) Major groups and other relevant stakeholders;

(iv) Communication and outreach activities;

(b) Revision of the existing guidelines for country-led initiatives and similar initiatives to enhance their contribution to the work of the Forum.

7. Emerging issues and challenges.

8. Forum Trust Fund.

9. Date and venue for the thirteenth session of the Forum.

10. Provisional agenda for the thirteenth session of the Forum.

11. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its twelfth session.

91. Also at its 2nd meeting, the Forum approved the provisional organization of work for the session, as circulated in an informal paper in English only, with the understanding that it might be further revised as warranted.

92. At its 10th meeting, on 5 May 2017, the Forum had before it a draft resolution entitled "Term of office of the officers of the Forum" which was circulated as an informal paper, in English only, and submitted by the Chair (Canada) on the basis of informal consultations.

93. At the same meeting, the Forum adopted the draft resolution (see chap. I, sect. B, resolution 12/2).

94. Also at the same meeting, following the adoption of the draft resolution, a statement was made by the representative of Ecuador.

D. Attendance

95. In accordance with paragraph 4 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35, the Forum is composed of all States Members of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies, with full and equal participation. The list of participants will be issued as document E/CN.18/2017/INF/1.

E. Documentation

96. The documentation considered by the Forum at its twelfth session is set out in annex II to the present report. Other relevant documentation is also available at the Forum website (www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/current-session/index.html).

Annex I

Summaries by the Chair of the Forum

A. Summary of the panel discussion on the contributions of the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, United Nations partners and stakeholders to the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030

1. The keynote speaker noted that the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 helped to address problems of fragmentation by serving as a "reference framework" for the forest-related work of the United Nations system and partners. The new workplan of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests would outline the collective contributions, including joint initiatives, of Partnership members to the implementation of the strategic plan. She noted that the new strategic framework of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and reflected recognition of the need for a strengthened policy dialogue across the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors. FAO would support countries in integrating sustainable forest management into national development programmes and action plans and in identifying new opportunities for financing sustainable development, with integrated approaches between forestry, agriculture and livestock. The 2016 edition of the *State of the World's Forests* aimed to show how forests contributed to 10 Sustainable Development Goals (Goals 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 15). She also highlighted that the FAO Regional Forestry Commissions could provide an efficient vehicle for facilitating two-way communication between forest policy discussions being held at the regional and global levels.

2. A panellist explained that the International Union for Conservation of Nature was an international organization that included both Governments and non-governmental organizations as members and was a member of the Partnership. Forests featured in the Union's programme framework for 2017-2020. The Union was supporting forest landscape restoration in more than 40 countries as part of the global effort to restore 150 million ha of deforested and degraded lands by 2020 (Bonn Challenge) and restore another 200 million ha by 2030 (New York Declaration on Forests). To date, 41 Union members had pledged to restore more than 148 million ha. The Union had prepared an analysis showing the contribution of forest restoration to global forest goal 1, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and the Role of Conservation, Sustainable Management of Forests and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks in Developing Countries (REDD-plus), as well as the net economic value of restored forests. She concluded by offering support in helping to capitalize on this work by making further use of such tools and approaches.

3. A panellist highlighted the contribution that the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora could make to all the global forest goals and most targets contained in the strategic plan. International trade in listed species must be undertaken legally and sustainably, which reduced the loss of forest biodiversity. When the Convention entered into force in 1975, it regulated trade in 18 tree species; it presently regulated trade in more than 900 tree species, putting obligations on both importing and exporting countries. Sustainable trade in tree species could benefit local communities. The Convention secretariat also played a key role in mobilizing financial resources for

sustainably managing forests with listed tree species, assisted countries in developing national legislation and cooperated with other organizations, such as the International Tropical Timber Organization, on the 10-year programme for implementing listings of tropical timber species under the Convention. The secretariat had confirmed its interest in becoming a member of the Partnership.

4. A panellist outlined the contribution of the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Network had 31 members across the Asia-Pacific region, including 26 economies and 5 international organizations, 2 of which (FAO and the International Tropical Timber Organization) were members of the Partnership. The Network focused on promoting sustainable forest management and forest rehabilitation in the region through policy dialogue, information sharing, capacity-building and demonstration projects. Key priorities in the Network's strategic plan for 2016-2020 were to contribute to the achievement of the global forest goals and forest-related Sustainable Development Goals by rehabilitating degraded forests and increasing forest cover, promoting sustainable forest management to enhance ecological functions and ecosystem security of forests, and enhancing forest contributions to socioeconomic development and improved local livelihoods. The informal forest planning network aimed to strengthen forestry planning processes through experience exchange, capacity-building and technical support.

5. Points raised during the interactive discussion included the following:

(a) The Collaborative Partnership on Forests would play a key role in helping to implement the strategic plan;

(b) Expansion of the Partnership should be considered to include interested intergovernmental partners at the international level (e.g. the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora);

(c) Consideration should be given to criteria for membership in the Partnership and its optimal size;

(d) A variety of non-member partners also had an important role to play in implementing the strategic plan, including the secretariats of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and regional and subregional organizations and processes;

(e) To avoid duplication and achieve synergies, the strategic plan should be promoted as a reference framework for forest-related work that could foster enhanced coherence among organizations and initiatives;

(f) The Forum secretariat should use its position within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to ensure that the value of the strategic plan was widely recognized throughout the United Nations system;

(g) The Global Forest Expert Panels of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (led by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations) are an important mechanism to enhance the science-policy interface;

(h) The International Union of Forest Research Organizations, with a comprehensive network of members, was in a good positon to help countries to build the scientific capacity to implement the strategic plan.

6. The following proposals were made on contributions to the implementation of the strategic plan:

(a) Encourage members of the Partnership and non-member organizations within the United Nations system to align forest-related aspects of their work programmes with the strategic plan;

(b) Encourage all actors to better communicate the benefits that the implementation of the strategic plan would bring for a wide range of Sustainable Development Goals, in addition to those that explicitly referred to forests;

(c) Invite Partnership members to help countries to implement the strategic plan through the development of simplified mechanisms for mobilizing additional resources to finance sustainable forest management and for capacity-building;

(d) Invite the Partnership to include a time table for the actions and initiatives outlined in its workplan;

(e) Invite the Partnership to consider a joint initiative to build the capacity of rural and local forest communities.

B. Summary of technical sessions on the contribution of forests to the theme of the 2017 high-level political forum: "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world"

7. An estimated 1.6 billion people (or 17 per cent of the world's population) depend directly on forests for subsistence, livelihood, employment and income generation. Forests and trees provide food, fuel for cooking and heating, water, medicine, shelter and clothing and function as safety nets in crises or emergencies, for example when crops fail owing to prolonged drought or when there are seasonal shortages. An estimated 80 per cent of forest loss is due to the conversion to agriculture, mostly in the tropics, and the main driver of deforestation in many parts of the world is the commercial development of palm oil, soya, timber plantations and beef farming on forest land. Multisectoral approaches are needed to address deforestation and forest degradation, as many of the drivers are outside the forest sector. Further measures aimed at eliminating deforestation associated with consumer goods supply chains would have a significant impact on reducing deforestation.

8. On the basis of the seven Sustainable Development Goals scheduled for in-depth review by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2017, technical discussions were held at the twelfth session on four thematic priorities: forests and poverty eradication (Goal 1), gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (Goal 5), forests and food security (Goal 2) and means of implementation for sustainable forest management (target 15.b and Goal 17). Four panel sessions were organized to facilitate the Forum's technical discussions on the four themes. The panel discussions are summarized below.

Panel session 1: Contribution of forests to the theme of the 2017 high-level political forum: "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world"

9. The keynote speaker welcomed the renewed interest in understanding the interactions between forests and poverty but highlighted a number of challenges, including problems of definition, lack of rigorous studies and the complex nature of such interactions. Definitional problems arose partly because forest-dependent people could include forest dwellers, farmers, smallholders and commercial enterprises, as well as many of the 370 million self-identified indigenous peoples who were among the world's most vulnerable, marginalized and disadvantaged groups. There were also wide differences in national and regional contexts, forest

area per capita, and ownership and user rights to the land and to forest goods and services. She contrasted the effectiveness of "old style" official development assistance with newer approaches, such as performance-based cash transfers and payments for environmental services. She noted that, although community-based forestry had had mixed outcomes, the experience of several middle-income countries suggested that potentially useful measures included multisectoral interventions in the promotion of farm forestry, strengthened producer organizations and empowered women's organizations, with a focus on productivity increase, improved market access and credit. She concluded by calling for more active engagement in partnerships with philanthropists and entrepreneurs to harness innovative technologies and forms of organization to expand knowledge and achieve social and environmental goals.

10. A panellist noted that for many forest-dependent people there was complementarity between forest income and agricultural income and that forests could be particularly valuable at times and seasons of low agricultural production. Examples of forest-based pathways towards prosperity included payments for environmental services and community forestry enterprises in Mexico; strengthening gender mainstreaming in forest reforms in China; smallholder forest plantations in Viet Nam; transferring State forests to local government and communal associations in Albania; and Bolsa Verde safety net transfers in Brazil. Factors that were critical for forests to promote prosperity included secure and increasing household returns from land and forests, adequate public services, access to markets and trade, sufficient resources to generate sustainable supplies, and access to investment incentives or credit. He gave an example of a dedicated grant mechanism designed to strengthen the capacity of indigenous peoples and local communities to participate in the World Bank forest investment programme and other REDD-plus programmes. While climate policies focused on rewards to protect standing trees, investment in productive forests and sustainable value chains was also needed. The panellist outlined a financial incentive mechanism to encourage deforestation-free commodity value chains that could benefit upstream value chain actors, and stressed the need for an integrated approach, learning lessons from the REDD-plus experience and developing simple, innovative mechanisms for creating pathways out of poverty.

11. A panellist identified key pointers to poverty, including inadequate facilities for education, health, clean water supplies, food supply, shelter, and employment or income opportunities, weak mechanisms for social inclusiveness and a lack of security. He noted that, while case studies highlighted the forests' contributions to employment, income, energy, food and medicine and demonstrated that forest goods and services could provide relief and a safety net for poor societies, such studies rarely indicated how forests could lift people out of poverty permanently. The panellist presented an analytical framework to account for forestry contributions through primary, secondary and tertiary production, concluding that poverty eradication required combined efforts from all economic sectors and could not be accomplished by forestry alone. Regarding policy and institutional arrangements, he noted the need to collect data and provide evidence of forestry's contribution to national economic development and the Sustainable Development Goals; to improve tenure and access rights to land and forest resources; and to strengthen governance, institutional structures and producer and community-based associations.

12. A panellist began by challenging the assumption that forests were a pathway out of poverty. She said that turning standing forests into reliable income streams at scale had always been challenging but recognized that the loss of forest goods and services resulting from deforestation could make poor households and poor countries worse off. Deforestation could lead to further impoverishment by

accelerating climate change and leading to other problems, such as landslides and flooding. With the exception of carbon, it seemed unlikely that monetizing ecosystem services would bring significant benefits to poor people at any scale. However, policies in developed countries could help to provide key parts of the solution, through commodity markets and forest-carbon finance. The main driver of deforestation in many parts of the world was the commercial development of palm oil, soya, timber plantations and beef farming on forest land, which could be addressed through measures to eliminate deforestation from consumer goods supply chains. The panellist concluded by stating that REDD-plus was a "great idea that had hardly been tried" and that adequate levels of finance should be made available to fund REDD-plus projects, with benefits going to local forest-dependent communities.

13. Participants highlighted various ways in which the role of forests in reducing poverty could be enhanced, recognizing that approaches successful in one context might not work in other situations. Points raised during the discussion included the following:

(a) There was an urgent need to tackle deforestation and forest degradation, not least because of its impact on poor forest-dependent people;

(b) Multisectoral approaches were needed to address deforestation and forest degradation, as many of the drivers were outside the forest sector;

(c) A more holistic approach would bring benefits for rural livelihoods through better integration with agriculture and lessons learned from the agricultural sector relating, for example, to productivity improvements, availability of microcredit and producer associations;

(d) There was a need to strengthen small and medium-sized enterprises in the private sector along the value chain and to explore alternative business opportunities, such as ecotourism;

(e) Secure land tenure and a rights-based approach to address inequalities were essential;

(f) Multi-stakeholder partnerships were important mechanisms in the context of forests and poverty;

(g) There were many examples of effective social forest programmes aimed at local communities and indigenous peoples. Some of those included making land available or allowing the use of forest products;

(h) More comprehensive forms of social support were needed to alleviate poverty more effectively;

(i) The FAO Forest and Farm Facility programmes usefully linked agriculture and forest-based activities in rural communities.

14. The following proposals were made to enhance the contribution of forests to poverty eradication and promote prosperity:

(a) Undertake independent, credible assessments of the contribution of forests to poverty alleviation with a view to assisting in the design of appropriate policy measures for different situations;

(b) Establish a monitoring framework to address gaps in data relating to the socioeconomic aspects of forests;

(c) Strengthen dialogue with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and philanthropic organizations, on working together to help to enhance the contribution of forests to poverty eradication;

(d) Invite the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its members to consider how to increase access for small-scale enterprises to financial services, including affordable credit, and promote the development of cooperatives or other associations to help small-scale producers with technical assistance, access to markets, integration into value chains and financial advice;

(e) Organize an international conference on halting deforestation and increasing forest area.

Panel session 2: Forests and Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls)

15. The keynote speaker highlighted the particular relevance of gender equality to global forest goals 2, 3 and 4 and targets 5.a, 5.b and 5.c of the Sustainable Development Goals. She explained that women faced challenges in the forest sector throughout the world and presented an analytical framework based on rights, power and equity. Women's rights to economic resources (target 5.a) encompassed the conflict between statutory and customary rights, issues of access to productive assets (land, forests, carbon), control, inheritance, formal and informal education, employment, equal pay and financial resources. She noted that the percentage of women employed in the forest sector varied widely across countries. In many countries, women needed to overcome barriers through the effective use of skills, technology and networks. It could also be difficult for women to secure the finance necessary to scale up their business if they were unable to offer collateral. To address those challenges, she presented a transformative gender agenda for forests based on three elements: education of women and girls at all levels; gender-sensitive employment (for example in relation to work-life balance); and development of gender-friendly financing instruments.

16. A panellist described gender issues in the forest sector in Jamaica. In the past, the Forestry Department of Jamaica was staffed primarily by men, with women working mainly in so-called "pink" jobs in human resources, accounting and secretarial roles. Although there were a few female graduates employees in the 1970s and early 1980s, most left owing to the lack of opportunities for upward mobility. The first female Chief Executive Officer was appointed in 1996, and things began to change. On the basis of recommendations from a consultant, the National Forest Management and Conservation Plan of 2001 included a gender strategy that aimed to make the Department a more gender-sensitive organization that incorporated gender issues into its operations. Women were recruited into professional and technical jobs, gender sensitization seminars were held, and staff worked in pairs as necessary. At present, 40 per cent of forest professional and technical posts were held by women.

17. A panellist explained that the African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests was an advocacy platform that aimed to secure women's forest and land property rights. Mainstreaming gender was critical to achieving the sustainable use of forest resources and forest conservation, improving forest management and governance and improving the lives of local people, including many of the world's poor. Defining "gender" as issues that focused on women, and on the relationship between men and women, their roles, access to and control over resources, division of labour, interests and needs, she noted that there were culturally and socially constructed differences between men and women that varied from place to place and over time. Reducing gender inequalities and mainstreaming gender into the forest sector required enabling political, legal and regulatory environments in which to address structural gender disparities and inequalities; access for women to productive resources and services and adequate infrastructure; women's full participation and leadership in decision-making processes; and

dedicated funding mechanisms to support women and gender activities. There was also a need for training in gender-related concepts, tools and techniques; building gender-related issues into the school curriculum; and engaging with male champions. She concluded by calling for a move from passive participation to active engagement for gender equality.

18. A panellist noted that the forest sector was still male-dominated, although women were major custodians of the world's forests. Environmental laws and policies tended to be "gender-blind", and the environmental movement had often neglected women's rights, as demonstrated in the text of the Rio Conventions. She explained the mission of the Women's Environment and Development Organization, which had three main pillars: advocacy and influence, capacity-building and training, and knowledge and outreach. Through those pillars, the entity had been able to promote the equal participation of women in climate negotiations through capacity-building and skills development. It also provided knowledge products to encourage decision makers to include a gender lens in their daily work. The "gender climate tracker" application gave information on research, decisions and actions related to gender and climate change, and disaggregated gender-related figures relevant to climate-related decision makers.

19. Participants agreed that empowering women and girls in all aspects of the forest sector could significantly improve the livelihoods of forest-dependent people and their societies and foster sustainable forest management. Points raised during the discussion included the following:

(a) Sustainable Development Goal 5 should be regarded not only as a stand-alone goal but also as a cross-cutting goal that was essential for the successful delivery of all other Goals;

(b) In many countries, the nexus between poverty, gender and sustainable forest management was a critical issue;

(c) There was a crucial need to secure equal rights for women with regard to land tenure, access to resources and financial services, education, information and technology, markets, skills development and value chains;

(d) Targeted policies and measures were needed to eliminate all forms of violence against women, including those living and working in forests, and to ensure comprehensive sexuality and reproductive health education and access to health services;

(e) Women were not a homogeneous group, and many suffered from additional discriminations;

(f) In some countries, the number of women studying forestry at the university level was increasing, owing perhaps in part to broader curricula that encompassed social forestry and ecosystem management;

(g) There was a need to provide information to girls at school about opportunities in forestry and to use role models to illustrate possible career paths;

(h) Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls might be promoted more actively in countries with a high proportion of women in political leadership positions.

20. The following proposals were made to enhance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the forest sector:

(a) Recognize gender issues when collecting data, for example by requesting gender-disaggregated data and information about tenure, employment and pay gaps;

(b) Develop a network of national focal points and share best practice on programmes, policies and measures designed to address gender inequality and promote gender empowerment;

(c) Encourage the use of role models to encourage girls to consider careers in forestry;

(d) Invite the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its members to consider developing gender-friendly financing instruments.

Panel session 3: Contribution of forests to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2: forests and food security

21. The keynote speaker explained that, although the number of undernourished people had fallen by 216 million since 1990-1992, there were still nearly 800 million undernourished people in the world. The Global Forest Expert Panel report *Forests, Trees and Landscapes for Food Security and Nutrition* (2015) presented evidence showing how forests and tree-based systems could complement agricultural production and provide more nutritionally balanced diets. While increasing dependence on grain had led to diets that lacked nutritional diversity, the availability of forest food products derived from edible leaves, fruits, fungi, animals and insects tackled this "hidden hunger" by providing micronutrients. Studies showed that access to forests and tree-based systems could contribute to the Zero Hunger Challenge in several ways. Forests and trees were associated with increased fruit and vegetable consumption and dietary diversity, forest foods provided a "safety net" during periods of seasonal food shortages or crop failure, and bushmeat and insects helped to diversify diets. Forests also benefited food security indirectly by providing sources of income for local people and ecosystem services essential for crop production and by serving as a genetic resource for breeding cultivated fruit trees to increase productivity and improve resistance to pests and diseases. He noted that there was a need to move beyond traditional debates about the conversion of forest land to agriculture by recognizing the complementary role of different production systems and conservation practices within multifunctional landscapes.

22. A panellist highlighted the continuing challenge of deforestation, noting that an estimated 80 per cent of forest loss was due to the conversion to agriculture, mostly in the tropics. The 2016 edition of the FAO report *State of the World's Forests* indicated that it was possible to achieve food security while maintaining or even increasing forest resources, as had been the case in 20 countries in the past 25 years. Such success depended on effective policies and policy instruments. For example, where large-scale agricultural commodity production was the main driver of deforestation, instruments might include measures to regulate land-use change. Where small-scale subsistence farming was the main driver, appropriate policy instruments might be aimed at improving farming practices and promoting agroforestry. The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security provided an excellent basis for establishing appropriate tenure arrangements and reflected FAO work to develop a common vision and integrated approach to sustainability. She called for innovative approaches to policies, programmes, investments, partnerships and cross-sectoral work in order to identify synergies and address trade-offs between sectors. In conclusion, the panellist took note of the Cancun Declaration (December 2016) and noted the commissioning by the Committee on World Food Security of a report on sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition, for consideration at its next meeting.

23. A panellist gave a historical overview showing that in some parts of the world forests and agricultural lands had traditionally been managed as integrated systems

for many centuries. When managed sustainably, such systems could provide a variety of foods from the forest while conserving biodiversity, maintaining forest cover and delivering ecosystem services. Shifting cultivation was currently practiced in more than 40 tropical countries, making diversified production possible on land unsuited for more intensive crop production. However, where cultivators had to intensify their practices, ecological and economic sustainability could be jeopardized, leading to negative perceptions. Agroforestry encompassed a wide array of production systems in which tree and shrub species were integrated with crops and/or animals on the same land unit. Many agroforestry practices were based on traditional knowledge of local and indigenous communities and particularly important in regions of the world where food security was a significant concern. Many hundreds of tree species were cultivated by farmers for household and local consumption, with a lesser number cultivated for sale in urban markets. Domesticated tree crops made significant contributions to food security and nutrition and were important sources of income. Agricultural and forest scientists increasingly recognized the value of these integrated systems and were exploring ways to combine traditional and formal scientific knowledge to enhance their productivity and other benefits.

24. A panellist focused on the role of trees in relation to nutrition. She reminded participants that having access to nutritious food was a key element of food security and that 2 billion people were micronutrient-deficient. Undernutrition caused 45 per cent of all child deaths in 2011. There was also a cyclical relationship between malnutrition and disease, with malnutrition leading to infection and infection increasing nutrient requirements. However, despite its importance, most measurements of food security failed to take adequate account of diet quality. Fruit and vegetables were important for diet quality, and meat and insects could also be important sources of micronutrients. A recent review paper attempting to quantify the contribution of forest foods to healthy diets in tropical countries found that where large quantities of forest foods were consumed, their contribution towards dietary adequacy was substantial. The panellist also pointed out that, in contrast to cereals (which were typically wind pollinated), fruit and vegetables required insect pollinators and thus benefited from the presence of suitable habitats, including trees.

25. Participants highlighted many ways in which forests and trees contributed to food security and gave examples from their countries. Points raised during the discussion included the following:

(a) There were strong links between food security and the delivery of Sustainable Development Goal 1 on ending poverty;

(b) There was scope to make further use of traditional knowledge on food products from forests by using scientific expertise to promote their benefits more widely;

(c) Food security and livelihoods could be enhanced by facilitating better market access, for example by strengthening producer organizations;

(d) There was a need for policies and measures focused on ensuring equal rights in order to address the barriers that prevented some groups, such as women, local communities and indigenous people, from making sustainable use of forest food resources;

(e) Wood-processing industries improved food security by providing jobs and sources of cash income;

(f) An integrated approach to land-use integration was essential: participants gave examples of cross-cutting national strategies and measures to promote agroforestry;

(g) There was a need for effective communication between sectors, especially where there was potential for conflict over trade-offs between land uses. The beneficial role of forest-related ecosystem services for agricultural production could provide a useful entry point for such discussions.

26. The following proposals were made to enhance the contribution of forests to food security and nutrition:

(a) Scale up approaches to integrated and sustainable management of natural resources for food production that are based on proven traditional knowledge;

(b) Develop pilot schemes to promote a landscape approach to community-based sustainable agroforestry practices;

(c) Raise awareness of the key role that forests and trees have in food security and nutrition through communication programmes targeted at key stakeholders;

(d) Invite the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to undertake a joint initiative to promote further development of deforestation-free commodity supply chains for such commodities as palm oil, soya and beef.

Panel session 4: Means of implementation for sustainable forest management (target 15.b and Goal 17)

27. A panellist explained that the Ford Foundation worked with other private philanthropic funders through the Climate and Land Use Alliance to help to mitigate climate change by protecting and managing tropical forests for ecosystem services and to reap benefits for forest communities and indigenous peoples. It could be difficult to find projects that were suitable for support, since the Foundation needed to be satisfied with the integrity of social and environmental impacts and address three key risks. The first risk was insecure land tenure. While 65 per cent of the world's land was under community tenure, only 18 per cent was legally recognized, and about 50 per cent of countries had no avenue in which to formalize rights. The second risk was conflict, which could result in delays, loss of reputation, increased costs and withdrawal of partner investors and in risk insurance being voided. The third risk was that the Foundation's finance was insufficient in the face of government subsidies for unsustainable forest and agricultural management, such as incentives for forest clearance. The panellist explained that the Foundation sought to invest in countries that demonstrated clear commitments to sustainable management and good governance. In addition to using its funding to support the establishment of community-managed funds, the Foundation also helped to establish intermediary funds which could help to connect remote communities with international finance, ensuring that finance was accompanied by expertise, learning and monitoring of environmental social and governance outcomes.

28. A panellist noted that the forest sector must compete with other sectors for public and private funding. Thus, it was necessary to make a sound case for investment in sustainable forest management, as well as address risks such as unclear land rights and weak governance arrangements. The World Bank Forest Action Plan 2016-2020 focused on two areas: one was sustainable forestry and the other was cross-sectoral, supporting "forest-smart" interventions in other sectors. Such interventions were justified in terms of the financial savings that resulted, for example, from preventing erosion affecting hydropower schemes, using forests for natural water filtration and preventing floods through mangrove preservation. However, forest-smart investment could be difficult to implement because of institutional silos. For example, it was proving difficult to scale up win-win solutions such as agroforestry. The panellist outlined the Bank's programmatic

approach, which used knowledge of different funding sources to put together an appropriate mix of financial instruments that meets client needs. This was necessary because of the wide variation in instruments in terms of objectives, rules and constraints. A cohesive finance package could be used to help to create an enabling environment for private investment through, for example, programmes that invested in land titling, tenure, concession management, community development, law enforcement, policy development and land-use planning. Innovative and flexible thinking was essential. Although forests were perceived as risky and the benefits of investment in forests were often not fully understood, instruments such as forests bonds were currently being taken forward in some countries. The panellist concluded by advocating the use of simpler approaches to funding wherever possible.

29. A panellist discussed motivations behind private sector investment in sustainable forest management. Investors normally looked for returns from timber but sometimes also secure revenue from non-timber products, such as rattan, or from services, such as tourism or water. Global timber consumption was about 4 billion m^3 per year. Sources of supply were 290 million ha of forest plantations and 4 billion ha of natural forests. Currently, nearly 50 per cent of timber came from plantations, but that was likely to increase to 60-70 per cent over the next 10 years. Private finance for investment in the management of forests came from the forest products industry, institutional and other investors, and land owners. Investment decisions were based on prospective economic returns, as well as the investment climate. Significant factors influencing the investment climate included forest policy, the availability of forest resources and land, markets and market access, technology and expertise, restrictions and transaction costs. The panellist explained that institutional investors owned increasing areas of forest and used timber industry management organizations as intermediaries. Since such organizations typically managed timberlands to maximize returns and often exited after 10 to 15 years, their investment strategy was a shorter-term strategy than that of the forest products industry. This had implications for investment in natural and semi-natural forests, which involved a longer investment horizon.

30. The moderator presented some key figures relating to support for the Global Environment Facility for sustainable forest management. Since 1991, the Facility had invested $2.7 billion in 411 forest projects and programmes that had attracted $13.8 billion in co-financing. During the sixth replenishment period (2014-2018), 44 projects and programmes had been approved, representing $711 million in Facility grants and $4.3 billion co-financed. Forests would have a prominent role in the seventh cycle, which was under preparation. The seventh cycle, from 2018 to 2022, was building on previous success and experience, with more integration of forests as a cross-cutting strategy. Forests were part of several proposed programmes and initiatives. The proposed level of forest-related financing represented a 25 per cent increase in the total replenishment.

31. Participants recognized the urgent need to continue to mobilize significant resources to promote the implementation of sustainable forest management. Points raised during the discussion included the following:

(a) A good start had been made to operationalize the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network;

(b) The forest financing landscape was changing, and there were many potential financing opportunities, including existing sources, philanthropic sources and innovative mechanisms;

(c) Cross-sectoral and synergistic approaches were important in mobilizing financing for forests;

(d) Sectors, such as water, agriculture and energy, enjoyed positive externalities from forests and would benefit from investing in sustainable forest management;

(e) Investors and others providing finance for sustainable forest management required a suitable enabling environment to de-risk their investment. Critical constraints could include insecure tenure, uncertainty over customary rights, competing land uses, subsidies that promoted unsustainable approaches to forest management, conflict and such governance problems as corruption and lack of transparency;

(f) Private investors sought adequate returns commensurate with risk and often preferred to manage large-scale investments. This meant that they and their intermediaries (such as timber industry management organizations) were more likely to invest in plantations. The management of natural forests and community-based management were less likely to attract private sector investment.

32. The following proposals were made to strengthen the means of implementation for sustainable forest management:

(a) Scale up the work of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network through adequate and predictable funding in order to address the Network's priorities set out in the strategic plan;

(b) Consider extending the Network's remit to include facilitation of finance for capacity-building, including for science and research related to sustainable forest management;

(c) Invite appropriate partners of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to develop the "clearing house" activity of the Network through a programmatic approach that mapped sources of financing and helped countries to identify the mix of financial instruments that were most likely to meet the needs of their national forest financing strategies;

(d) Improve the transparency of the Network through an online platform for sharing information about its operations, potential funding windows for sustainable forest management and lessons learned; and by inviting a panel composed of partner countries that had benefited from the Network's assistance to report their experience at future sessions of the Forum.

Annex II

List of documents

Document symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title*
E/CN.18/2017/1	2	Provisional agenda and annotations
E/CN.18/2017/2	3	Note by the Secretariat on the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030
E/CN.18/2017/3	4	Report of the Secretary-General on monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress towards implementing the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030, including the United Nations forest instrument and voluntary national contributions
E/CN.18/2017/4	5	Note by the Secretariat on means of implementation for sustainable forest management
E/CN.18/2017/5	6	Report of the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation, coordination and engagement on forest-related issues
E/CN.18/2017/6	8	Note by the Secretariat on the Forum Trust Fund
E/CN.18/2017/7	4 (b)	Note verbale dated 16 March 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests
E/CN.18/2017/L.1	10	Provisional agenda for the thirteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests
E/CN.18/2017/L.2	9	Dates and venue of the thirteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests
E/CN.18/2017/L.3	11	Draft report on the organization of the session
E/CN.18/2017/INF/1		List of participants

Other relevant documentation is also available at the Forum website (www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/current-session/index.html).

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